

*Special Committee on Judicial Election Campaign Intervention
2018 Judicial Elections*

2018-07 Opinion

Canon 5(F)(7) of the Code of Judicial Conduct provides:

This Canon 5F shall apply to all candidates for judicial offices of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, chancery courts, circuit courts and county courts, be they incumbent judges or not, and to the families and campaign/solicitation committees of all such candidates. ***Persons who seek to have their name placed on the ballot as candidates for such judicial offices and the judicial candidates' election committee chairpersons, or the chairperson's designee, shall no later than 20 days after the qualifying date for candidates in the year in which they seek to run complete a two-hour course on campaign practices, finance, and ethics sponsored and approved by the Committee.*** Within ten days of completing the course, candidates shall certify to Committee that they have completed the course and understand fully the requirements of Mississippi law and the Code of Judicial Conduct concerning campaign practices for judicial office. Candidates without opposition are exempt from attending the course.

The Special Committee on Judicial Election Campaign Intervention offered campaign seminars on May 18, 2018 and May 28, 2018. Also, the Special Committee allowed candidates who were not able to attend either of these seminars an opportunity to view a video recording of the seminar to comply with this requirement.

Brad Clanton qualified as a candidate for the Court of Appeals, District 4, Place 2. Mr. Clanton did not attend either of the scheduled seminars. Mr. Clanton was contacted by Darlene Ballard, Executive Director of the Commission on Judicial Performance, and was given an opportunity to appear and watch the video recording of the seminar. Mr. Clanton made an appointment, on June 20, 2018 at the office of the Commission on Judicial Performance, to appear and watch the video recording. Mr. Clanton failed to appear for this appointment.

The Special Committee has determined that it is appropriate to notify the public that Brad Clanton has failed to comply with Code of Judicial Conduct Canon 5(F)(7). Specifically, neither Mr. Clanton nor his committee chair person has completed the required two-hour course on campaign practices, finance, and ethics.

Further, the Special Committee is of the opinion that Mr. Clanton's failure to comply with the requirement of Canon 5(F)(7) results in a violation of Canon 5(A)(3)(a), which

requires that “[a] candidate for a judicial office shall maintain the dignity appropriate to judicial office and act in a manner consistent with the integrity and independence of the judiciary.”

This opinion is limited to the scope and authority of the Special Committee under the Mississippi Code of Judicial Conduct.

Any questions should be in writing and directed to:

Special Committee on Judicial Election Campaign Intervention

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